

PERSONNEL POLICY

Fauquier County, Virginia

Policy Title:
Acceptable Computer System
And Internet Use

Section No.:
52

Effective Date:
August 21, 2000

PURPOSE

Fauquier County provides a computer system, including access to the Internet, for the purpose of facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication. The Board of Supervisors intends that the computer system be used: (1) for the purposes of work, communication or research consistent with the Board of Supervisors' objectives; (2) for legitimate County business; and (3) consistent with the mission or administrative function of the County.

SCOPE

All users of Fauquier County's computer system have the responsibility to use this system in a considerate, ethical, and lawful manner. The purpose of this policy is to set forth the standards to which users must adhere in their use of the County's computer system. Employees who are authorized to use the computer system shall not be entitled to an expectation of privacy in the use of the system, and use shall be subject to monitoring by management at any time without notice or suspicion of wrongdoing.

DEFINITION

For purposes of this policy, the term "computer system" includes hardware, software, data communication lines and devices, terminals, printers, CD-ROM devices, tape drives, servers, mainframe and personal computers, the Internet and other internal or external networks.

For purposes of this policy, the term "account" shall mean the authorization to access computers or networks owned, leased or maintained by the County or accessed utilizing County assets.

GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

The Board of Supervisors has chosen to govern the use of Fauquier County's computer system through the establishment of this policy. The County's computer system is not a public forum. Violations of any of the provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to, the following: loss of accounts, loss of access, suspension or termination of employment, or legal action.

POLICY:

I. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Use of Accounts

The County considers all accounts established by it as property of Fauquier County. The County authorizes the use of the accounts for specific purposes. Since accounts have real value, attempts to circumvent the account, system, to use the accounts of others without authorization, or to use accounts for other than their intended purposes are all forms of theft or misappropriation of public resources and shall be deemed a violation of this policy. An authorized user of an account may not use the account for personal gain, disclose its password, or otherwise make the account available to others who have not been authorized to use the account.

B. Integrity of the Network and Operating System

Users shall not utilize programs that harass other users of the facility, infiltrate the system and/or damage the software or hardware components of the system. Since all users depend on the availability and integrity of the network system, defects discovered in system accounting or system security shall be reported to the appropriate system administrator so that steps can be taken to investigate and solve the problem. Use of the electronic communication facilities to send fraudulent, harassing, obscene, indecent, profane, threatening, or intimidating messages is prohibited. Use of the electronic communications facilities to receive, review, or download obscene, indecent, profane, or illegal messages or materials is prohibited. Intentional damage of the system is prohibited.

C. Privacy of Other Users

Users shall not intentionally seek or provide information on, obtain copies of, or modify data files or programs belonging to other users without appropriate authorization. Attempts to gain unauthorized access to information of others without their permission will be treated as a violation of this policy. Unauthorized searching through directories to find unprotected information likewise is a violation. System Administrators will respect the privacy of accounts. Users, when requested, shall cooperate with System Administrators in investigations of system abuse.

D. Use of Facilities and Equipment

Each network site has rules and regulations that govern the use of equipment and facilities at that site. Violation of facility rules and regulations shall be deemed a violation of this policy. Each site has operators, consultants, and/or supervisors who have been given the responsibility to supervise the use of that site. Users shall cooperate with site supervisors at all times.

II. ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT

- A. The County's computer system is not a public forum.
- B. Any communication or materials located on, disseminated through or used in conjunction with the computer system, including electronic mail or other files deleted from a user's account, may be monitored or read by County officials.
- C. Use of the computer system for research and communication purposes is a privilege, not a right. Administrators, supervisory personnel, department heads, and other employees may be required to meet qualifications for use of the computer system for continued employment.
- D. The failure of any employee to follow the terms of this policy or any accompanying regulation may result in loss of computer system privileges, disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action.
- E. Fauquier County is not responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable when using the computer system or for any information retrieved via the Internet. Furthermore, Fauquier County will not be responsible for any unauthorized charges or fees resulting from access to the computer system.
- F. All use of Fauquier County's computer system shall be consistent with the Board of Supervisors' goal of promoting excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication.

III. AUTHORIZATION OF USE

Each administrator, department manager, supervisor or employee whose duties include authorizing employees or volunteers to use of the computer system, shall ensure that these regulations have been discussed with the employee or volunteer prior to authorizing the use.

IV. COMPUTER SYSTEM USE – TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A. The following terms and conditions apply to any and all users of the County's computer system:

1. **Acceptable Use:** Use of the County's computer system shall be: (1) for the purposes of work, communication or research; (2) consistent with the Board of Supervisors' policies; and (3) for legitimate County business.
2. **Privilege:** The use of the County's computer system is a privilege, not a right.
3. **Unacceptable Use:** Each user is responsible for his or her actions on the computer system. Prohibited conduct includes:
 - using the network for any activity which results in a violation of copyright, license agreement or contract;
 - transmitting, sending, receiving, viewing or downloading any material in violation of any federal, state or local law;
 - using the computer system for private financial or commercial gain;
 - knowing and intentional waste of system resources, such as file space;
 - gaining unauthorized access to resources or entities within or without the County system, or any form of hacking;
 - posting material authorized or created by another without his or her consent;
 - using the computer system for commercial or private advertising;
 - submitting, posting, publishing or displaying any obscene, profane, threatening, illegal, or other inappropriate material via the computer system;
 - using the computer system without authorization, or while access privileges are suspended or revoked;
 - vandalizing the computer system, including destroying data by creating or spreading viruses or by other means.
4. **Network Etiquette:** Each user is expected to abide by generally accepted rules of etiquette, including the following:
 - Be polite;
 - Users shall not forge, intercept or interfere with e-mail messages;
 - Use appropriate language. The use of obscene, lewd, profane, threatening or disrespectful language is prohibited;

- Users shall not post personal contact information about themselves or others;
 - Users shall respect the computer system's resource limits;
 - Users shall not post chain letters or download large files;
 - Users shall not use the computer system to disrupt others;
 - Users shall not read, modify or delete data owned by others;
 - Users shall not use e-mail accounts of others without their consent.
5. **Liability:** The Board of Supervisors makes no warranties for the computer system it provides. The Board of Supervisors shall not be responsible for any damages to the user from use of the computer system, including loss of data, non-delivery or missed delivery of information, or service interruptions. The County denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the computer system.
6. **Security:** Computer system security is a high priority for the County. If any user identifies a security problem, the user shall notify the system administrator immediately. All users shall keep their passwords confidential and shall follow computer virus protection procedures.
7. **Charges:** The County assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges or fees as a result of using the computer system, including telephone or long-distance charges.